DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 394 969 SP 036 685

TITLE Statewide Education Reform Survey: The Judgements, Opinions and Perspectives of Kentucky School Superintendents, 1995.

INSTITUTION Kentucky Association of School Superintendents.; Kentucky Inst. for Education Research, Frankfort.

PUB DATE Oct 95

NOTE 85p.; For related documents, see SP 036 686-694.

PUB TYPE Statistical Data (110)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Attitudes; *Educational Assessment; *Educational Change; Elementary Secondary Education; Program Evaluation; School Administration; State Departments of Education; State Standards; State Surveys; Statewide Planning; *Superintendents

IDENTIFIERS Kentucky; *Kentucky Education Reform Act 1990; *Reform Efforts

ABSTRACT

This report describes the attitudes of school superintendents in Kentucky about the implementation of school reforms based on the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 (KERA); this survey also investigated changes in the perceptions of superintendents over the previous year related to the policies, programs, and practices of KERA. The study was conducted via a mail-out questionnaire sent to all 176 Kentucky school superintendents of whom 105 responded (60 percent). Specifically, the survey focused on the following issues: how the schools had changed since KERA; the most positive and the most negative effects; reliable measures for school improvement; how KERA-initiated programs were working; priorities for improving reform programs and practices; extent of superintendents' support for beliefs underlying KERA; perceived support for school reform; impact on the stress level of teachers, students, and school administrators; reactions to frequently recorded statements about the effects of KERA; and superintendents' positions on issues related to academic expectations, assessment options, accountability for student learning, and potential test options for the 1995-96 school year. Findings are reported on each of the focus questions. As a general evaluation, 80 percent of superintendents believed that schools had improved during the previous 5 years, and more than 90 percent did not want to return to pre-KERA policies and practices. The results are presented in 28 pages of tables. (NAV)

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1995 Statewide Education Reform Survey of School Superintendents

conducted by the

Kentucky Institute for Education Research

146 Consumer Lane • Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

in collaboration with the

Kentucky Association of School Superintendents

October 1995

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1995 STATEWIDE EDUCATION REFORM SURVEY

The Judgements, Opinions and Perspectives of

KENTUCKY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

A Study Conducted by the
Kentucky Institute for Education Research
Roger Pankratz, Executive Director

in collaboration with the
Kentucky Association of School Superintendents
Roland C. Haun, Executive, Director

October 1995

Acknowledgments

This study was a collaborative effort between the Kentucky Association of School Superintendents (KASS) and the Kentucky Institute for Education Research. It was conducted with a limited budget and required the help of a number of professionals and their staff. To all who worked on this effort we owe a debt of gratitude. First of all, we want to thank the 105 school superintendents who took the time out of their busy schedules to respond to the eleven-page questionnaire. Also, we want to thank Brenda Blackburn and Toni Wilson, Secretaries at KASS, who helped with correspondence and collected the questionnaires as they were sent to the KASS office. And finally, we are most grateful to Nila Weddle, Executive Assistant of the Institute, who spent many hours entering and processing the data, creating the graphics for this report, and word processing the report document.

Roger S. Pankratz
Roland C. Haun

The Purpose of the Study

This study was one of several statewide surveys conducted in 1995 by the Kentucky Institute for Education Research to obtain the assessments and opinions of Kentucky school personnel, parents and the public regarding programs, practices and issues associated with the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 (KERA). This study focused on superintendents and was conducted via a mail-out questionnaire sent to all 176 Kentucky school superintendents. In addition, during July 1995, telephone surveys were conducted with approximately 200 school principals, 600 classroom teachers, 450 parents with school-age children and 850 general public.

Since this was the second year of surveys of stakeholder groups it was also a purpose of this study to determine any changes in the perceptions of superintendents over the past year related to the policies, programs and practices of KERA.

The Survey Questionnaire

The survey instrument sent to all superintendents was an edited and adapted version of the script used in the statewide telephone poll of principals, teachers and council parents.

Specifically, the survey questionnaire asked for the school superintendent's perceptions, opinions and ideas about the following:

- How have schools changed since KERA was introduced?
- What are the most positive results of KERA?
- What are the negative effects of education reform?
- What are reliable measures for school improvement?
- To what extent are programs initiated by KERA working?

- What are the priorities for improving reform programs and practices?
- To what extent do superintendents support beliefs underlying KERA?
- What is the perceived support for school reform?
- What is the stress level of teachers, school administrators and students?
- What are the reactions to frequently recorded statements about the effects of KERA?
- What are the positions of superintendents on issues related to:
  - Academic expectations?
  - Assessment options?
  - Accountability for student learning?
  - Potential test options for the 1995-96 school year?

The Study Sample

Study questionnaires were sent to all 176 school superintendents in Kentucky. One hundred and five completed questionnaires were returned, to exceed a 60 percent response rate.

The Methodology

On July 11, 1995 an eleven-page questionnaire was mailed to all Kentucky school superintendents at their workplace. Cover letters from Roland Haun, Executive Director of the Kentucky Association of School Superintendents (KASS), and Roger Pankratz, Executive Director of the Kentucky Institute for Education Research (KIER), requesting their participation accompanied the questionnaire. All questionnaires were returned to the KASS office and delivered to the KIER office for processing. In late August a follow-up letter was sent to all superintendents requesting additional responses. All data were processed by Kentucky Institute for Education Research staff.

Key findings of superintendent survey:

1. General Evaluation of KERA 1995

   - More than 80 percent of superintendents continue to believe that schools have improved over the past five years and more than 90 percent do **not** want to return schools to pre-KERA policies and practices.

   - Superintendents identified the most positive results of KERA as:

     - Extended School Services Programs.
     - Improved Teaching/Learning Strategies.
     - Family Resources and Youth Service Centers.
     - The Pre-School Program.
     - Improved Writing Skills.
     - Additional Funding for Education.
     - Increased Availability of Educational Technology.
     - The Primary Program.
     - More Resources for Professional Development.

   - On the other hand the most negative effects on schools as a result of reform efforts were perceived as:

     - Problems caused by school councils not working well.
     - Problems resulting from the state's school assessment and accountability system.
     - Teachers being overwhelmed and stressed by extra demands and lack of time to plan and teach.
     - Confusion caused by inconsistent or unclear directions from the Department of Education.
     - Poor instructional practices due to misunderstandings about the purpose and operation of the Primary Program.
     - Excessive paperwork associated with reform policies.

- Superintendents believe student scores on standardized tests and on college entrance examinations are the most reliable measure of student learning and school improvement. Superintendents also believe the percent of students finishing high school is a good indicator of school performance.

- KIRIS was judged a reliable measure of school improvement by 36 percent and an unreliable measure by 42 percent of superintendents.

2. Evaluation of programs initiated by KERA

   - More than 75 percent of superintendents surveyed judged the following KERA initiatives to be working very well or moderately well:

     - The Pre-School Program
     - The Primary Program
     - Education Technology
     - Professional Development
     - Extended School Services
     - Family Resources and Youth Services Centers

   - KERA initiatives that received somewhat lower marks by superintendents were:

     - Curriculum frameworks - working well 62%
     - School-Based Decision Making (SBDM) - working well 51%
     - Kentucky Instructional Results Information Systems (KIRIS) - working well 40%

   - A significantly higher proportion of superintendents judged the state's formula for equalizing finances for schools across the state (SEEK) to be working well than a year ago. (67% in 1994 *vs.* 79% in 1995)

   - The primary reason given for KIRIS and SBDM not working well was design; the primary reason given for curriculum frameworks not working was lack of training for teachers.

3. Priorities for improvement

- More than 80 percent of all superintendents responding to the survey rated the following as a very high or extremely high priority of attention to improve the benefits of education reform:

  - Establishing the validity of reliability of KIRIS.
  - Helping schools align their curricula with academic expectations.
  - Helping teachers understand what students should know and be able to do at different grade levels.
  - Reducing the paperwork associated with KERA.
  - Providing test information back to students on how to improve student performance.

4. Support for Education Reform

- More than 75 percent of superintendents surveyed agree with the following beliefs underlying KERA:

  - We should set high standards of achievement for all children (97% agree).
  - It is not enough to require students to show knowledge of facts - they must also demonstrate they can apply what they know in real-life situations (94% agree).
  - All children can learn and most at a high level (80% agree).
  - Decisions effecting instructions should be made at the local school level (75% agree).

- KERA beliefs that were supported by a majority but less than 75 percent were:

  - More learning resources should be focused on students who are not learning to their ability (64% agree).
  - In primary schools students should not be labeled as belonging to a specific grade level (59% agree).

- More than 90 percent of superintendents surveyed said they are "very supportive" or "supportive" of KERA programs and policies.

- A strong majority of superintendents rated teachers and school administrators as supportive of KERA programs and practices (71% rated teachers as supportive, 82% rated administrators as supportive).

- A majority of superintendents rated parents and the general public as neutral toward or not supportive of KERA reforms. (57% rated parents as neutral or not supportive, 75% rated the general public as neutral toward or not supportive of KERA).

5. Effects of Education Reform

- Only about half of superintendents rated the stress level of teachers and school administrators as major or extreme. The apparent stress level is significantly lower than a year ago when more than 70 percent of superintendents said stress levels of teachers and administrators were major or extreme.

- Significantly fewer superintendents in 1995 rate their stress level as major or extreme compared to their 1994 self-report (32% in 1995; 49% in 1994).

- A strong majority of superintendents agree that:

  - The new learning goals and strategies introduced in KERA have made learning fun for a lot more children (79% agree).
  - Performance assessments have changed the way teachers are teaching and students are learning (89% agree).
  - If multi-age grouping in the primary program were made optional other aspects of the primary program should be maintained and strengthened (92% agree).
  - School accountability of some type is critical to motivate teachers and students to do their best (89% agree).
  - If writing portfolios did not count as part of the school accountability index teachers would greatly reduce the emphasis on teaching writing (80% agree).

- A slight majority of superintendents agree that:

  - Teachers, school administrators and parents often feel too intimidated by colleagues or superiors to speak their true feelings about KERA (65% agree).

- The heavy emphasis on communication and thinking skills short-changes students on the content they will need to be successful in life (53% agree).

- A majority of superintendents disagreed or were unsure regarding the following statements about the effects of KERA:

  - Kentucky's school accountability system of rewards and sanctions has taken the fun out of teaching and learning (27% unsure; 32% disagree).
  - KERA will enable students to do as well or better on college entrance exams such as ACT or SAT than a traditional curriculum (45% unsure; 26% disagree).

6. Superintendent's stance on assessment and accountability issues.

   Academic Expectations:

   - Superintendents largely agree that "the academic expectation needs to be better defined, expanded and clarified" (71% agree).

   - Superintendents are evenly divided on "whether or not academic expectations are clear to most teachers and administrators" and "whether or not the academic expectations should be substantially revised" (44% agree, 45% disagree on the first; 34% agree, 35% disagree on the second).

   - Superintendents disagree that the academic expectations need to be discarded and replaced with a new set of learning targets (57% disagree).

   Assessment Options:

   - Superintendents agree that:

     - KIRIS assessments would be more valid and reliable if they included multiple-choice items (67% agree).
     - KIRIS should include a variety of performance assessments (79% agree).

- total school performance and individual student performance should be measured by different tests (58% agree).

- A majority of superintendents disagree that KIRIS tests should be replaced by nationally normed commercial achievement tests (58% disagree).

Accountability Options:

- Superintendents are divided in their responses to most accountability options:
  - Both rewards and sanctions are necessary to hold teachers accountable for learning (39% agree, 49% disagree).
  - Public disclosure of school scores without rewards or sanctions would motivate teachers to do their best to improve learning (28% agree, 24% neutral, 48% disagree).
  - The school accountability index should include measures of the school's instructional practices as well as test scores. (50% agree, 34% neutral, 16% disagree).
  - Holding students and parents accountable for learning should be done at the local school rather than at the state level (49% agree, 18% neutral, 33% disagree).

- A majority of superintendents disagree that "school rewards for high performance but no sanctions for low performance would motivate teachers to do their best and improve learning" (60% disagree).

- Superintendents are somewhat divided on the issue of assigning a Distinguished Educator to a "school in decline" as an effective strategy to improve student performance (35% agree, 43% disagree).

Potential Testing Options for the 1995 School Year:

- Superintendents largely agree that in the 1995-96 school year Kentucky should administer a nationally normed, standardized test, not for accountability, but to determine the achievement level of students and also that the Department of Education should administer a variety of assessments to determine which should be used in future accountability tests (71% agree with the first; 73% agree with the second).

- A slight majority of superintendents agree that Kentucky should continue the portfolio program in 1995-96 but not for rewards and sanctions (52% agree).

- Superintendents are divided in their opinions about whether or not the Department of Education should continue the KIRIS testing in 1995-96 as scheduled (46% agree, 48% disagree).

- A majority of superintendents oppose the idea of suspending all student testing until the state has redesigned the assessment system (66% oppose).

The Results

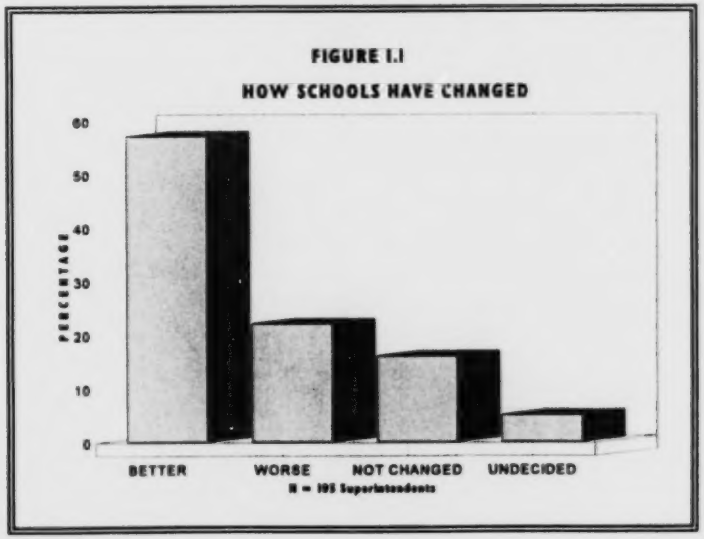
1.0 General Evaluation of KERA

1.1 How Schools Have Changed

Question 1 - *Thinking back over the past five years, would you say that the local schools in your district have changed for better, changed for worse, not changed much, or undecided?*

Table 1.1 - How Schools Have Changed

Better		Worse		Not Changed		Undecided	
1995	change from 1994	1995	change from 1994	1995	change from 1994	1995	change from 1995
84.2%	+ 0.9%	4.0%%	+ 2.3%	7.9%%	- 0.4%	4.0%	- 2.7%

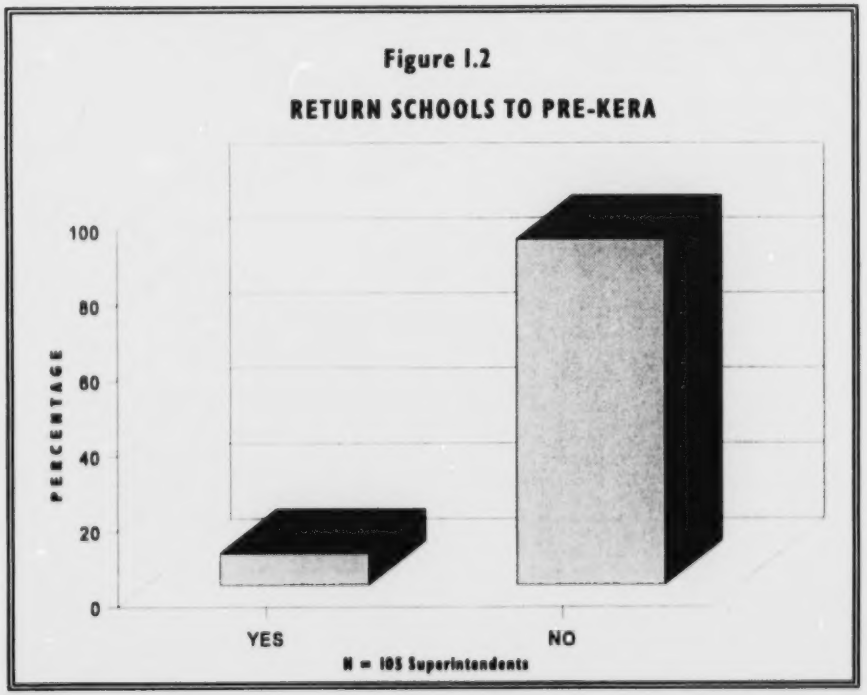


1.2 Willingness to return schools to pre-KERA

Question 2. *If you could return schools to 1989 and as they were before KERA, would you do so?*

Table 1.2 - Return Schools to Pre-KERA

Yes		No	
1995	change from 1994	1995	change from 1994
8.3%	- 3.2%	91.8%	+ 3.2%



1.3 Most Positive Results of Education Reform

Question 16. *What have been the most positive results effected by KERA in your schools?*

NOTE: Question 16 was an open-ended "write-in" question. Many superintendents did not provide a written response and fewer provided written responses in 1995 that in 1994.

Frequent Positive Results Reported	Frequency 1995	Frequency 1994
Extended School Services	25	24
Improved Teaching/Learning Strategies	24	21
FR/YSC	21	15
Pre-school Program	21	28
Improved Writing	19	21
Additional Funding/Equity Statewide	19	41
Education Technology	18	19
Primary Program	17	18
Professional Development	17	23
New Vision Focus Attitude Toward Education	10	17
School-Based Decision Making	8	12
School Accountability	6	14
Improved Student Performance	5	--
Less Local Politics	5	4

1.4 Most Negative Effects of Education Reform

Question 17. *What have been the most negative effects on your schools resulting from KERA or its programs?*

Frequent Negative Effects Reported	Frequency 1995
Problems caused by dysfunctional school councils	27
Divisiveness caused by assessment and accountability	24
Being overwhelmed by stress and lack of time to plan and teach	21
Confusion caused by inconsistent directions from KDE	10
Poor instructional practices due to misunderstanding the Primary Program	9
Excessive paperwork	7
Narrowing of instruction due to pressure from KIRIS assessments	6
Political factions caused by taking sides on KERA	5
The "fall out" from resistance to change	5
Confusion from not knowing what to teach	5

1.5 Reliable Measures of School Improvement

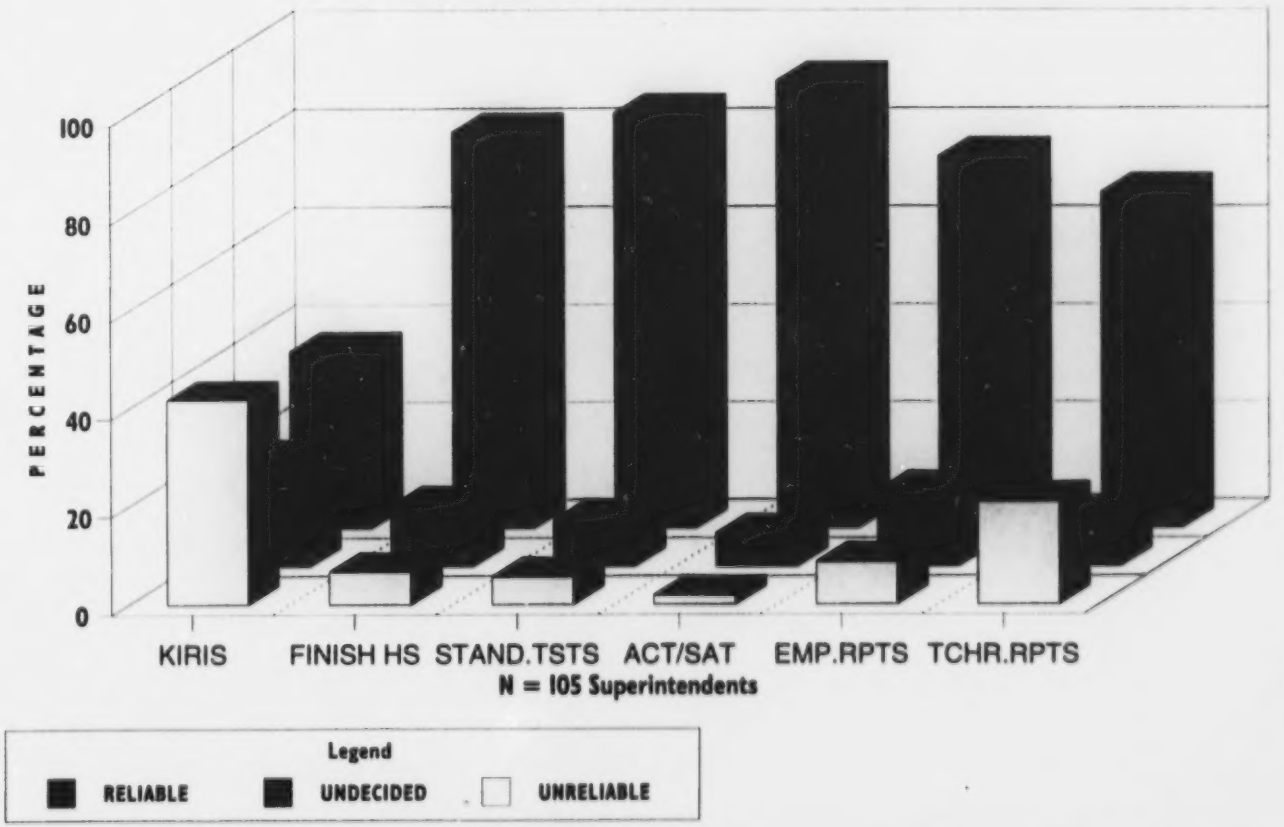
Question 3. *Below are six ways to measure whether students are learning and schools are improving. Please indicate your opinion on how **reliable** or **unreliable** you believe each one would be in determining how well students are learning and how much schools are improving.*

Table 1.5 - The Reliability of Six Performance Measures

Item	Reliable	Undecided	Unreliable
A. Student performance on the state's new testing program (KIRIS)	36.2	21.9	42.0
B. The percentage of students who finish high school	81.0	12.4	6.7
C. Student scores on standardized tests in mathematics, science, social studies, and reading given to students across the country	84.8	9.5	5.7
D. Scores on college entrance exams such as the ACT and SAT	91.4	6.7	1.9
E. Employer reports on how well high school graduates of local schools are prepared for the world of work	76.0	15.4	8.7
F. Student grades or progress shown on report cards	68.6	10.5	21.0

FIGURE I.5

MEASURES OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT



2.0 Evaluation of KERA Initiatives

2.1 Extent to which KERA initiatives are working

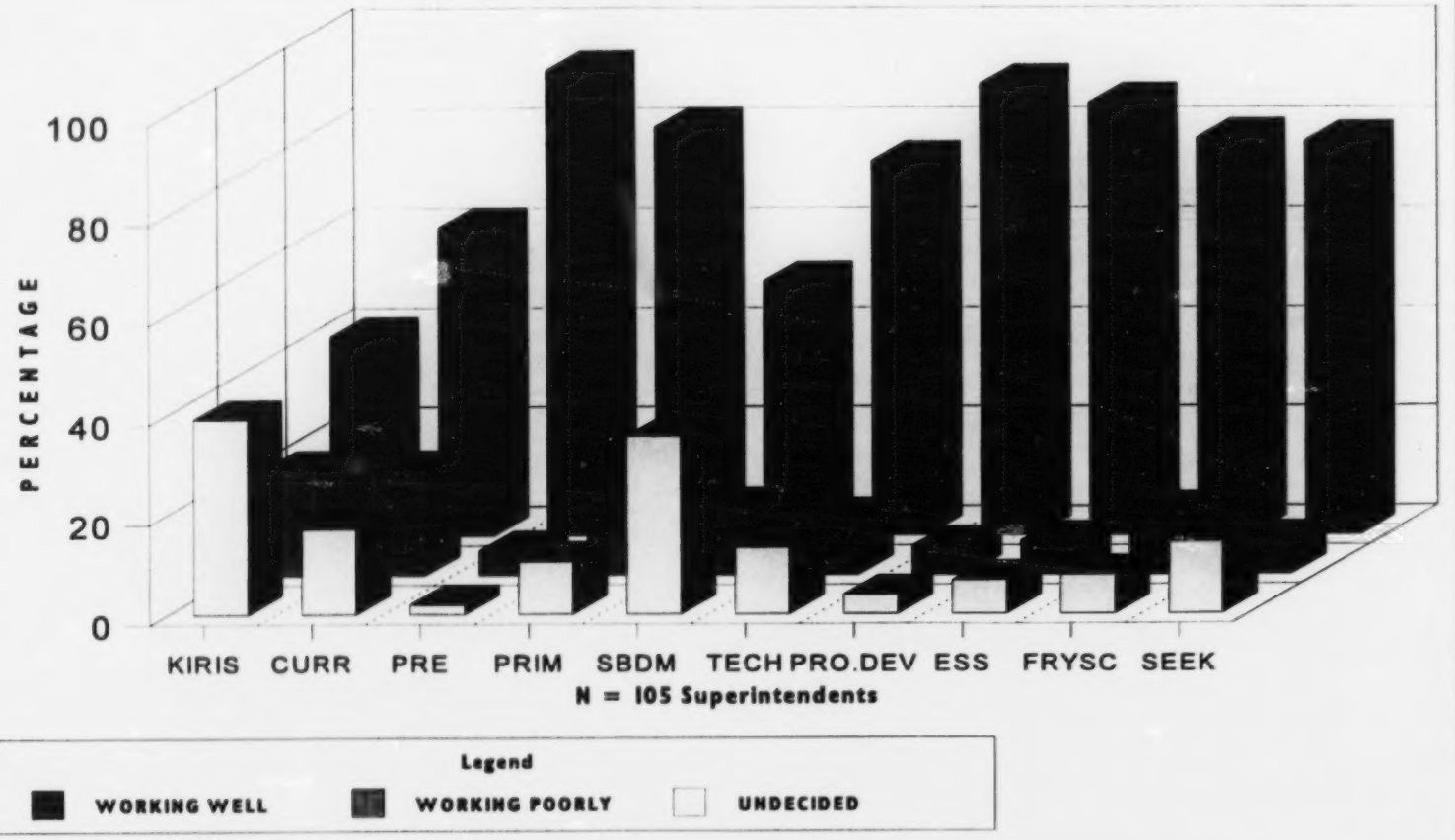
Question 4 - *Below are key programs introduced by KERA. Indicate your opinion on how each program is working in your local school system?*

Table 2.1 - Evaluation of KERA Initiatives

Program	Working Well		Undecided		Working Poorly	
	1995	Change from 1994	1995	Change from 1994	1995	Change from 1994
A. Kentucky's new statewide testing program in grades 4, 8, and 11	40.0	- 6.8	21.0	- 1.6	39.1	+ 8.4
B. New curriculum frameworks for instruction	61.9	+ 2.2	21.0	- 2.4	17.1	+ 0.2
C. The Pre-School Program	93.3	- 5.1	4.8	+ 3.2	1.9	+ 1.9
D. The Primary Program in grades K to 3	81.9	- 0.4	7.6	- 4.5	10.5	+ 4.9
E. School-Based Decision Making	51.0	+ 0.2	13.5	- 9.6	35.6	+ 10.0
F. Educational Technology	75.2	- 4.6	11.4	+ 4.1	13.3	+ 0.4
G. Professional Development and Training for Teachers, Administrators, Parents, and Others	90.5	+ 0.2	5.7	+ 1.7	3.8	- 1.9
H. Extended School Services	86.7	+ 0.5	6.7	- 0.6	6.7	+ 0.2
I. Family Resource and Youth Service enters	79.6	+ 3.7	12.6	- 1.7	7.8	- 2.0
J. The state formula for equalizing financing for schools across the state	79.1	+ 12.2	6.7	- 6.2	14.3	- 5.9

FIGURE 2.1

EVALUATION OF KERA INITIATIVES



2.2 Reasons Why Programs Are Not Working

Question 5. *In the last question (4 - above), if you judged a program(s) to be working poorly or moderately poorly, what factors would you say are the greatest reasons why the program is working poorly?*

Table 2.2 - Reasons for Programs Not Working

Program	Primary Reasons for not Working (%)			
	Not understood	Training	Design	Time
A. Kentucky's new statewide testing program in grades 4, 8, and 11	17.7	11.4	58.2*	12.7
B. New curriculum frameworks for instruction	31.9	36.2	19.1	12.8
C. The Pre-School Program	7.7	30.8	38.5	23.1
D. The Ungraded Primary Program in grades K - 3	22.2	18.5	37.0*	22.2
E. School-Based Decision Making	17.5	25.4	42.9*	14.3
F. Educational Technology	25.0	17.9	39.3	17.9
G. Professional Development and Training for Teachers, Administrators, Parents, and Others	15.8	26.3	15.8	42.1
H. Extended School Services	18.8	31.3	37.5	12.5
I. Family Resource and Youth Service Centers	15.0	40.0	45.0	0
J. The state formula for equalizing financing for schools across the state	21.1	15.8	57.9*	5.3

* Significantly higher than in 1994

3.0 Priorities for Improvement

3.1 Actions That Would Improve Programs, Teaching and Learning

Question 8. *The following items are often mentioned by Kentucky school administrators, teachers, and parents as areas of concern that, if addressed, would improve teaching and learning and make KERA programs work better. To what extent do you believe each item should be a priority for attention?*

Table 3.1 - Priorities for Attention

Areas of Concern	Priority Rating							
	Very High Priority	Change from 1994	Moderately High Priority	Change from 1994	Undecided	Change from 1994	Not at all Important	Change from 1994
A. Helping teachers understand what students should know and be able to do at different grade levels	87.5	+ 26.2	9.6	- 18.6	1.0	- 5.5	1.9	- 2.1
B. Establishing the validity and reliability of KIRIS	91.4	+ 0.3	4.9	- 2.5	1.9	+ 0.3	1.9	+ 1.9
C. Helping schools align their curriculum with the Academic Expectations*	91.4	--	7.7	--	1.0	--	--	--
D. Providing test information back to schools on how to improve student performance	81.7	- 11.1	17.3	10.9	1.1	+ 0.2	--	--
E. Reducing the threat of sanctions for teachers*	47.6	--	19.4	--	18.5	--	14.6	--
F. Improving communications and distribution of information at the local district level*	41.3	--	43.3	--	9.6	--	5.8	--
G. Improving two-way communication with the Department of Education	60.6	- 6.3	26.9	+ 1.1	9.6	+ 5.6	2.9	- 0.4
H. Reducing the paperwork associated with KERA	83.7	+ 5.5	11.5	- 7.0	3.9	+ 1.4	1.0	+ 0.2
I. Providing teachers more time for design of curriculum and instruction*	75.0	--	19.2	--	3.9	--	1.9	--

* New on the 1995 survey

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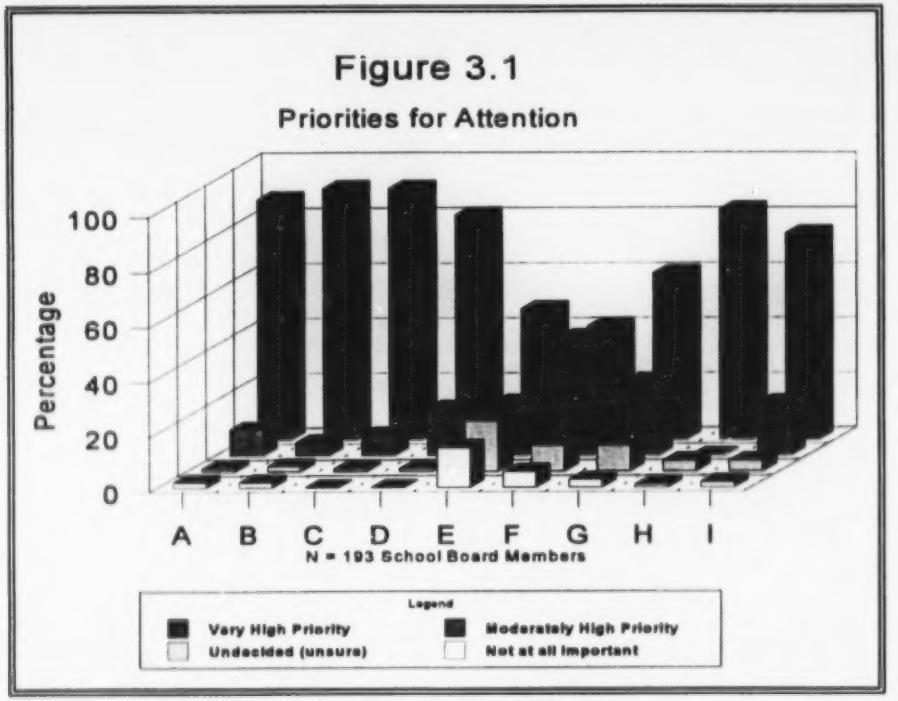


A. Helping teachers understand what students should know and be able to do at different grade levels
B. Establishing the validity and reliability of KIRIS
C. Helping schools align their curriculum with the Academic Expectations
D. Providing test information back to schools on how to improve student performance
E. Reducing the threat of sanctions for teachers
F. Improving communications and distribution of information at the local district level
G. Improving two-way communication with the Department of Education
H. Reducing the paperwork associated with KERA
I. Providing teachers more time for design of curriculum and instruction

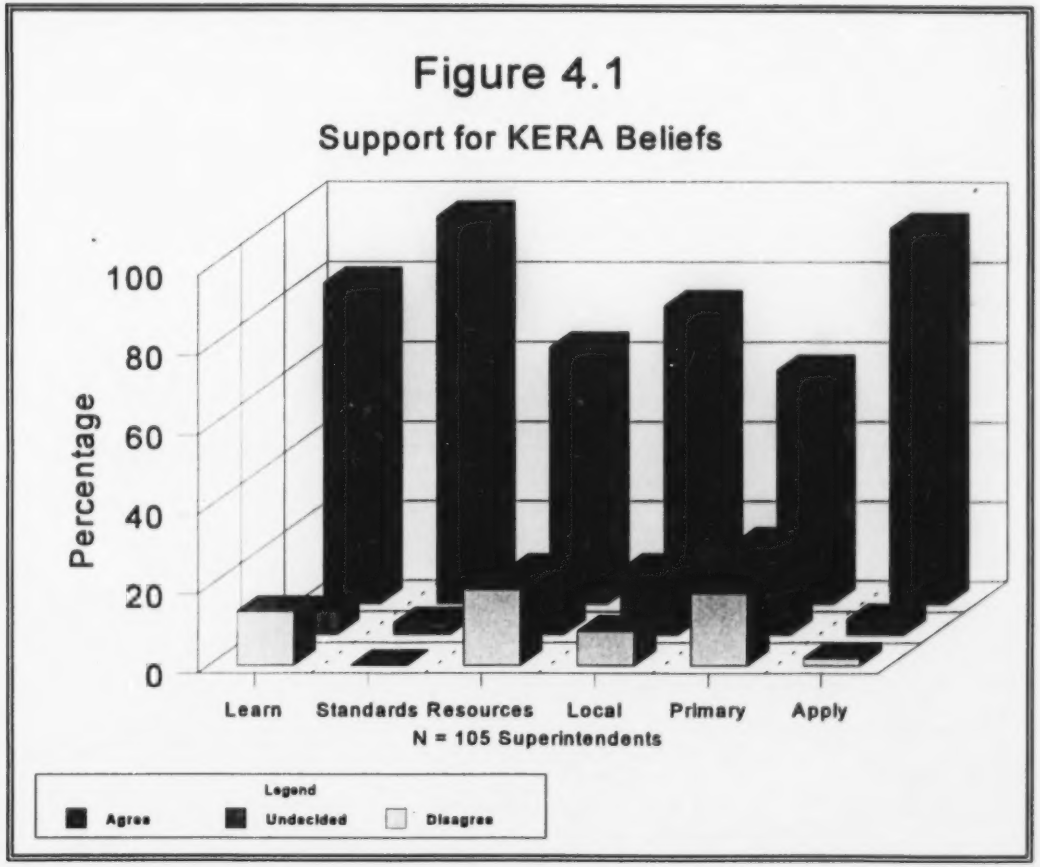
4.0 Support for Education Reform

4.1 Support for Beliefs Underlying KERA

Question 9. *The following are statements of belief held by the designers of KERA that undergird education reform programs and practices. For each of the items, please indicate to what extent you agree/disagree with each statement.*

Table 4.1 - Support for Beliefs that Support KERA

Belief Statements	Agree	Change from 1994	Undecided	Change from 1994	Disagree	Change from 1994
A. All children can learn, and most at a high level.	80.6	+ 18.8	5.8	- 96	13.6	- 9.2
B. We should set high standards of achievement for all children.	97.1	+ 0.3	2.9	+ 0.5	0.8	- 0.8
C. More learning resources should be focused on students who are not learning to their ability or are falling behind.	64.4	- 9.0	16.4	+ 5.9	19.2	+ 3.1
D. Decisions affecting instruction should be made at the local school level.	74.8	+ 0.6	16.5	+ 3.6	8.7	- 4.2
E. In the primary schools, students should not be labeled as belonging to a specific grade level.	58.7	+ 7.1	23.1	- 8.1	18.3	+ 1.1
F. It is not enough to require that students show their knowledge of facts -- they must also demonstrate that they can apply what they know in real-life situations.	94.2	- 0.1	3.9	- 0.2	1.9	+ 0.3



A - All children can **learn**, and most at a high level.
B - We should set high **standards** of achievement for all children.
C - More learning **resources** should be focused on students who are not learning to their ability or are falling behind.
D - Decisions affecting instruction should be made at the **local** school level.
E - In the **primary** schools, students should not be labeled as belonging to a specific grade level.
F - It is not enough to require that students show their knowledge of facts -- they must also demonstrate that they can **apply** what they know in real-life situations.

4.2 Perceived Support for School Reform

Question 7. *Over the past four years, there have been both public support and criticism of KERA. How would you characterize the level of support of the following groups?*

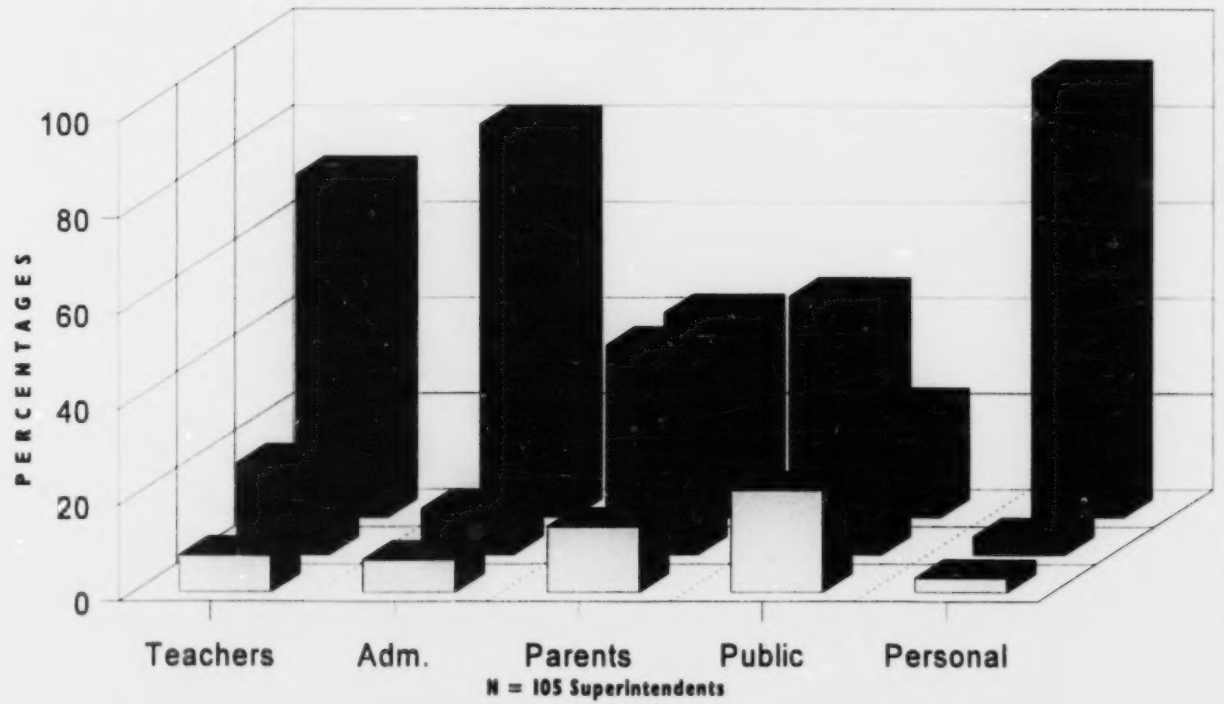
Table 4.2 - Support for KERA

Groups	Level of Support					
	Supportive	Change from 1994	Neutral	Change from 1994	Not Supportive	Change from 1994
A. The support level of teachers in your school	71.4	+ 0.1	19.1	+ 1.1	9.5	- 3.1
B. The support level of administrators in your district	81.9	+ 4.0	9.5	- 5.3	8.6	- 0.7
C. The support level of parents	42.7	*	43.7	*	13.6	*
D. The support level of the general public	23.1	*	53.9	*	23.0	*
E. Your own personal support level	91.4	- 4.5	3.9	+ 0.5	4.7	+ 2.1

* New question in 1995

Figure 4.2

SUPPORT FOR KERA



5.0 Effects of KERA

5.1 Stress Level of Teachers, Administrators, Students, and Superintendents

Question 6. *School personnel across the state report a lot of stress due to the extra work and the demands of KERA. How would you characterize the stress level of different groups you have contact with on a regular basis?*

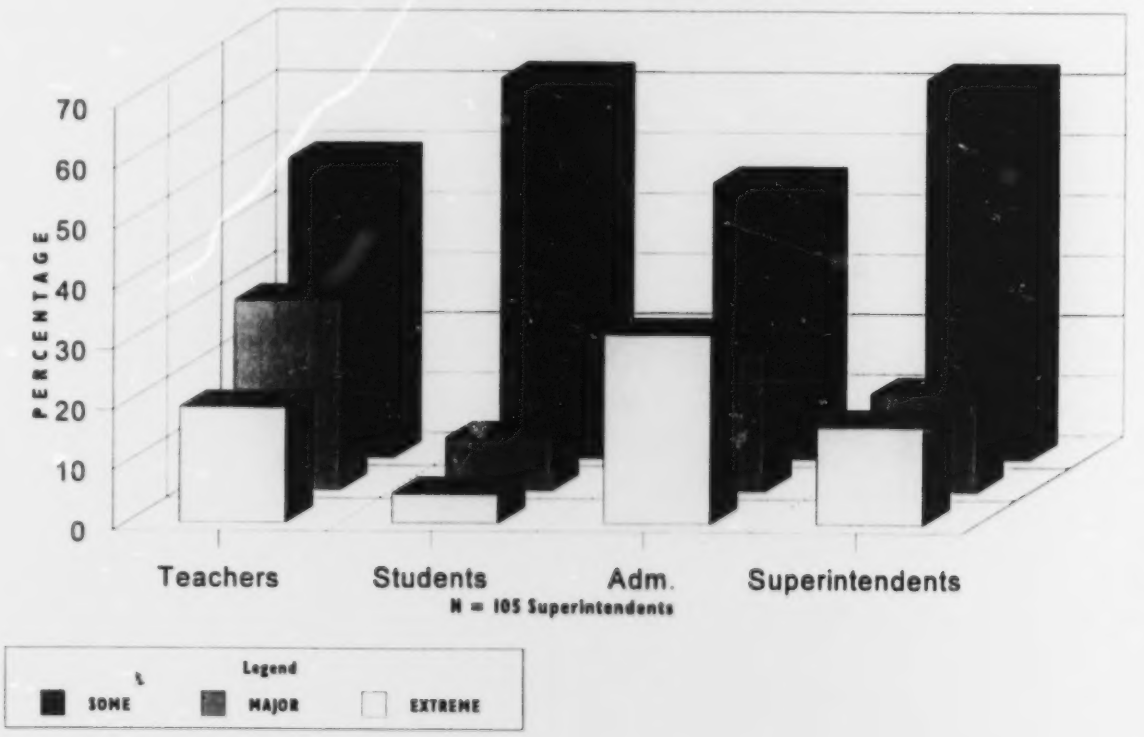
Table 5.1 - Stress Level of Teachers, Administrators, Students, and Superintendents

Groups	Extreme Stress	Change from 1994	Major Stress	Change from 1994	Some Stress	Change from 1994
A. The stress level of teachers	19.1	- 22.3	31.4	- 3.3	49.5	+ 25.8
B. The stress level of school administrators	31.4	- 4.9	22.9	- 14.3	45.7	- 19.3
C. The stress level of students	4.8	*	8.6	*	86.7	*
D. Your own personal level of stress	16.2	- 5.5	16.2	- 11.3	66.7	+ 12.0

* New question in 1995

Figure 5.1

PERCEIVED STRESS LEVEL



5.2 Effects Mentioned by School Administrators, Teachers and Parents

Question 10. *The following are statements about school reform that have been made by school administrators, teachers and parents. What are your feelings about these statements?*

Table 5.2 -

Statements	Superintendents' Reactions					
	True	Change from 1994	Un-decided (Unsure)	Change from 1994	Not True	Change from 1994
A. The new learning goals and strategies introduced in KERA have made learning fun for a lot more children.	79.8	+ 8.0	13.5	- 6.7	6.7	- 1.3
B. Teachers, school administrators and parents often feel too intimidated by colleagues or superiors to speak their true feelings about KERA.	65.4	-1.5	4.8	- 4.1	29.8	+ 5.6
C. The heavy emphasis on communication and thinking processes in KERA short-changes students on content they need to be successful in life.	52.9	+25.8	12.5	- 8.5	34.6	- 17.0
D. The performance assessments in KIRIS have changed the way teachers are teaching and students are learning.	89.4	+ 24.1	9.6	- 6.5	1.0	- 17.6
E. KERA will enable students to do as well or better on college entrance exams such as the ACT or SAT than a traditional curriculum.	28.9	+2.1	45.2	+ 5.4	26.0	-7.4
F. Kentucky's school accountability system of rewards and sanctions has taken the fun out of teaching and learning.	41.2	- 1.4	26.5	+1.9	32.4	- 0.4
G. If multi-age grouping in the primary program were made optional, other features of the program, such as developmentally appropriate practices, continuous progress, professional team work and authentic assessment should be maintained and strengthened.*	92.2	*	6.9	*	1.0	*
H. School accountability of some type is critical to motivate teachers and students to do their best.*	88.5	*	6.7	*	4.8	*
I. If writing portfolios did not count as part of the school accountability index, teachers would greatly reduce their emphasis on teaching writing.*	79.8	*	10.6	*	9.6	*

* New on the 1995 survey

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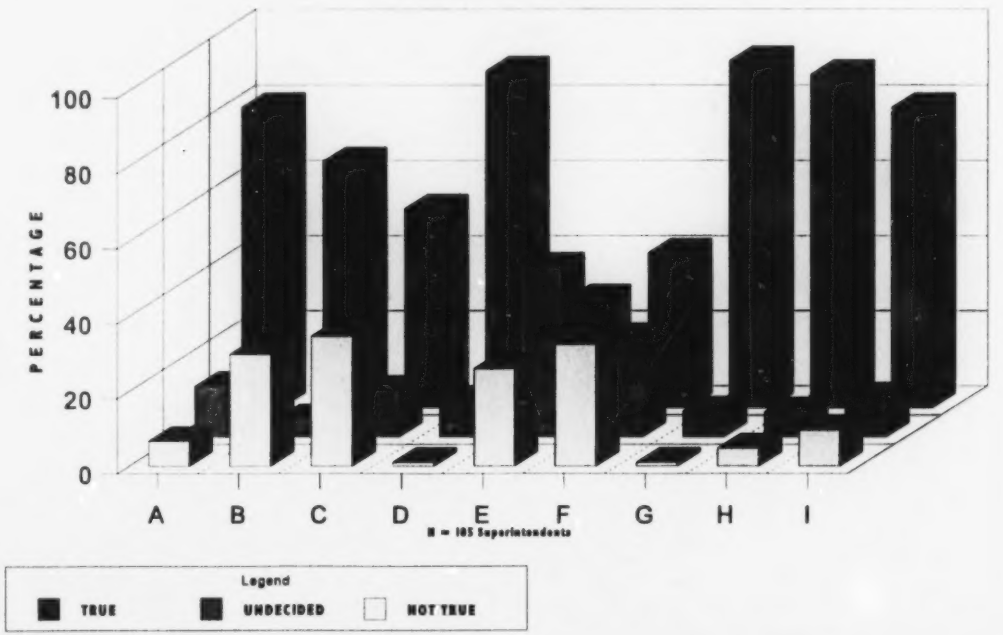
Figure 5.2

Superintendents' Reactions



A. The new learning goals and strategies introduced in KERA have made learning fun for a lot more children.
B. Teachers, school administrators and parents often feel too intimidated by colleagues or superiors to speak their true feelings about KERA.
C. The heavy emphasis on communication and thinking processes in KERA short-changes students on content they need to be successful in life.
D. The performance assessments in KIRIS have changed the way teachers are teaching and students are learning.
E. KERA will enable students to do as well or better on college entrance exams such as the ACT or SAT than a traditional curriculum.
F. Kentucky's school accountability system of rewards and sanctions has taken the fun out of teaching and learning.
G. If multiage grouping in the primary program were made optional, other features of the program, such as developmentally appropriate practices, continuous progress, professional team work and authentic assessment should be maintained and strengthened.
H. School accountability of some type is critical to motivate teachers and students to do their best.
I. If writing portfolios did not count as part of the school accountability index, teachers would greatly reduce their emphasis on teaching writing.

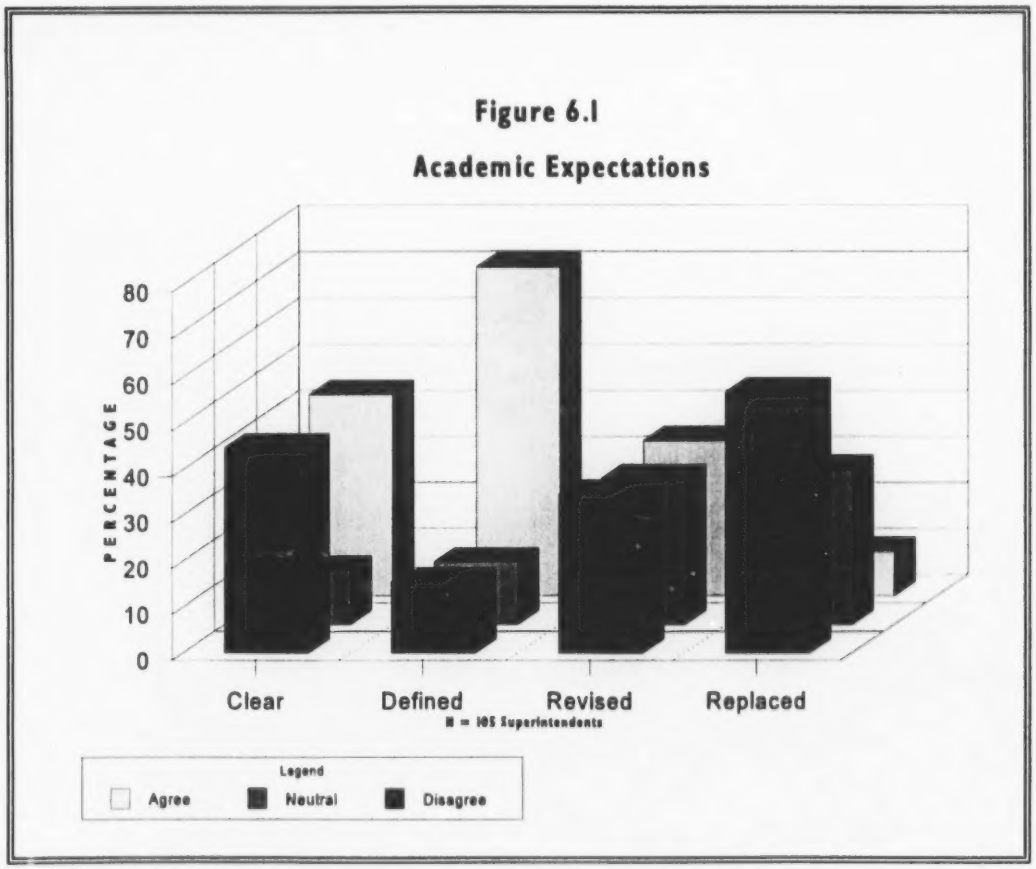
6.0 Superintendent's Stance on Assessment and Accountability Issues

6.1 Issues Related to Academic Expectations

Question 11. *Kentucky's Learning Goals and Academic Expectations define the learning targets for students and what is to be tested in KIRIS. Please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement with each.*

Table 6.1 - Agreement/Disagreement on Statements About Academic Expectations

Statements	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
A. The Academic Expectations are clear to most teachers and administrators.	43.7	11.7	44.7
B. The Academic Expectations need to be better defined, expanded and clarified.	71.2	13.5	15.4
C. The Academic Expectations need to be substantially revised.	33.7	31.7	34.6
D. The Academic Expectations need to be discarded and replaced with a new set of learning targets.	9.6	33.7	56.7



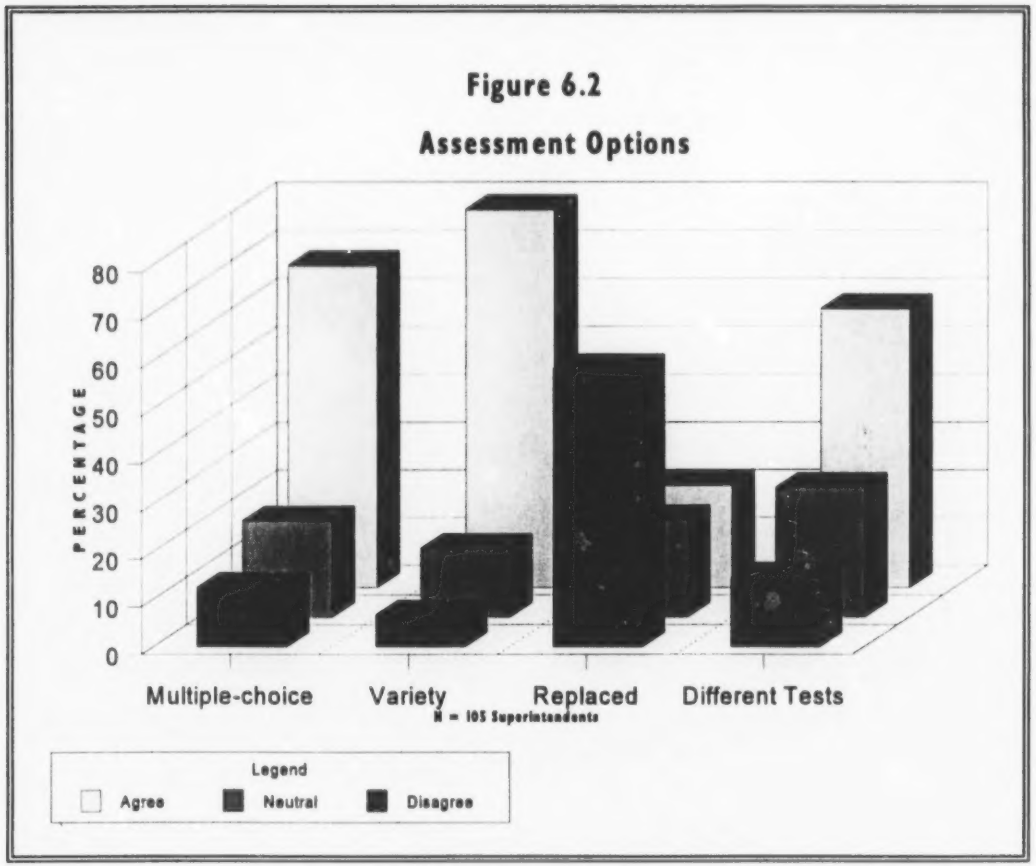
A. The Academic Expectations are **clear** to most teachers and administrators.
B. The Academic Expectations need to be better **defined**, expanded and clarified.
C. The Academic Expectations need to be substantially **revised**.
D. The Academic Expectations need to be discarded and **replaced** with a new set of learning targets.

6.2 Issues Related to Assessment Options

Question 12. *Please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement with each of the following assessment options.*

Table 6.2 - Agreement/Disagreement With Assessment Options

Statements	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
A. KIRIS assessments would be more valid and reliable if they included multiple-choice items.	67.3	20.2	12.5
B. KIRIS should continue to include a variety of performance assessments such as writing assignments, open-ended questions, and on-demand performance tasks.	78.9	14.4	6.7
C. KIRIS tests should be replaced by nationally normed, commercial tests like the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills or the California Achievement Test.	21.4	20.4	58.3
D. Total school performance and individual student performance should be measured by different tests.	58.3	27.2	14.6



A. KIRIS assessments would be more valid and reliable if they included **multiple-choice** items.

B. KIRIS should continue to include a **variety** of performance assessments such as writing assignments, open-ended questions, and on-demand performance tasks.

C. KIRIS tests should be **replaced** by nationally-normed, commercial tests like the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills or the California Achievement Test.

D. Total school performance and individual student performance should be measured by **different tests**.

72

73

6.3 Issues Related to Accountability Options

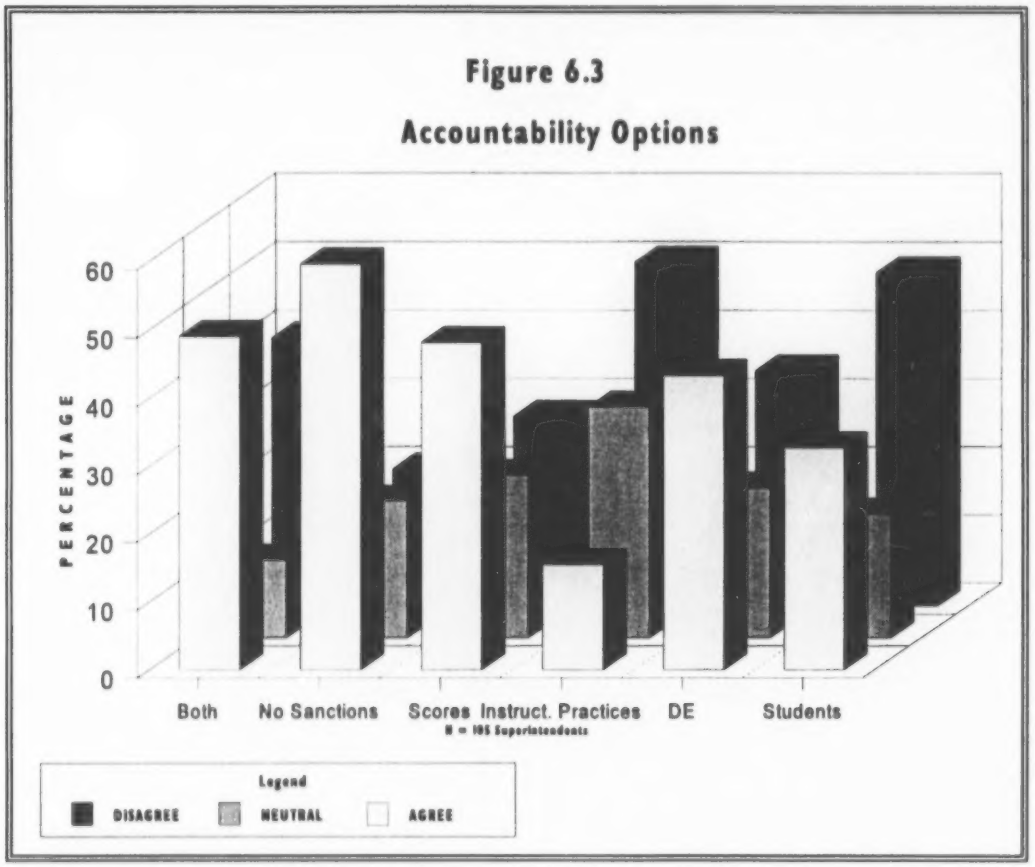
Question 13. *Following is a series of statements about accountability for student learning. Please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement with each.*

Table 6.3 - Accountability Options

	Accountability	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
A.	Both rewards and sanctions are essential to hold teachers and schools accountable for student learning.	39.4	11.5	49.0
B.	School rewards for high performance, but no sanctions for low performance, would motivate teachers to do their best and improve learning.	20.2	20.2	59.6
C.	Public disclosure of school scores without rewards or sanctions would motivate teachers to do their best and improve learning.	27.9	24.0	48.1
D.	The School Accountability Index should include measures of the school's instructional practices as well as test scores.	50.5	34.0	15.5
E.	Assigning a Distinguished Educator to a "school in decline" is an effective strategy for helping those schools to improve student performance.	34.6	22.1	43.3
F.	Holding students and parents accountable for learning should be done at the local school rather than at state level.	49.0	18.3	32.7

Figure 6.3

Accountability Options



A. **Both** rewards and sanctions are essential to hold teachers and schools accountable for student learning.
B. School rewards for high performance, but **no sanctions** for low performance, would motivate teachers to do their best and improve learning.
C. Public disclosure of school **scores** without rewards or sanctions would motivate teachers to do their best and improve learning.
D. The School Accountability Index should include measures of the school's **instructional practices** as well as test scores.
E. Assigning a **Distinguished Educator** to a "school in decline" is an effective strategy for helping those schools to improve student performance.
F. Holding **students** and parents accountable for learning should be done at the local school rather than at state level.

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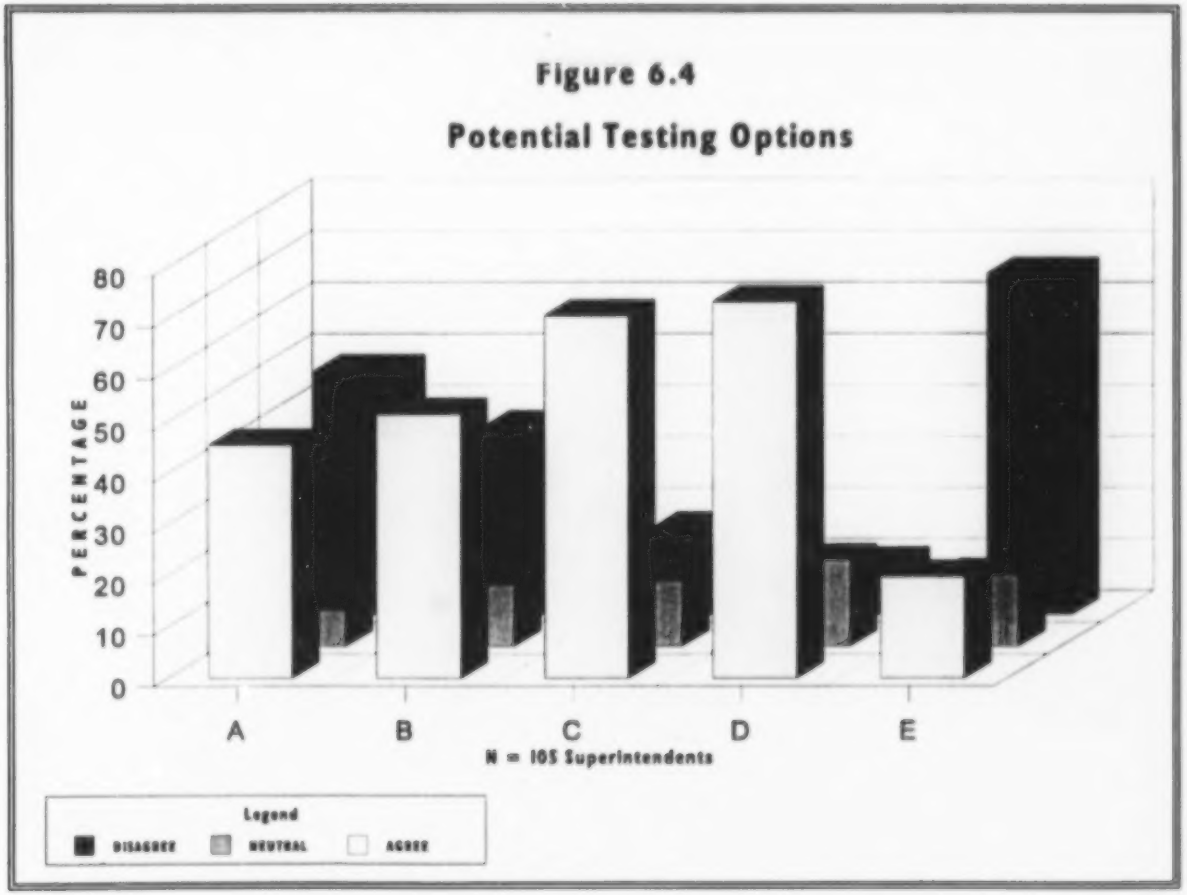
6.4 Issues Related to Potential Testing Options for 1995-96

Question 15. *Based on a recent study, the Legislative Oversight Committee of the Office of Education Accountability has recommended that the Department of Education take the time to make appropriate and wise adjustments to the assessment and accountability system. Would you agree or disagree with each of the following options for the statewide testing system in the 1995-96 school year?*

Table 6.4 - Potential Testing Options

Options		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
A.	Continue the KIRIS testing as scheduled	45.5	7.1	47.5
B.	Continue the portfolio program and report scores, but not for rewards or sanctions	51.5	11.9	36.6
C.	Administer a nationally normed, standardized test, not for accountability, but to determine the achievement level of students	70.6	12.8	16.7
D.	Administer a variety of KIRIS performance assessments, including multiple-choice items, to determine which should be used in the future	73.3	16.8	9.9
E.	Suspend all student testing until the state has redesigned the assessment system	19.8	13.9	66.3



A. **Continue** the KIRIS testing as scheduled.

B. Continue the **portfolio** program and report scores, but not for rewards or sanctions.

C. Administer a **nationally normed**, standardized test, not for accountability, but to determine the achievement level of students.

D. Administer a **variety** of KIRIS performance assessments, including multiple choice items, to determine which should be used in the future.

E. **Suspend** all student testing until the state has redesigned the assessment system.

7.0 Demographics

7.1 The number of years of experience as a superintendent is:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 or more
9.5	9.5	9.5	10.7	9.5	3.7	10.7	36.9

7.2 The primary subject area you taught when you were in the classroom was:

Science	Social Studies	Math	Arts/ Humanities	Practical Living	Language Arts	Vocational Education	Physical Education
25%	24%	12%	3%	0	16%	8%	11%

7.3 Your education level is:

Above Rank I	Rank I (30 hrs. above masters)	Rank II (Masters or 30 hrs. above Baccalaureate)
74%	25.0%	1.0%

7.4 Your sex is:

Female	Male
8.1%	91.9%

7.5 **Your age category is:**

25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 or older
0	8.0%	66.0%	26.0%	0

7.6 **Your racial/ethnic heritage is:**

White	African American	Asian	Hispanic	American Indian	Some other racial group
99.0%	0	0	0	1.0%	0

7.7 **The Educational Region to which your district belongs is:**

Region 1 - Murray area	Region 2 - B. Green area	Region 3 - Louisville area	Region 4 - Covington area	Region 5 - Lexington area	Region 6 - Corbin area	Region 7 - Morehead area	Region 8 - Prestons-burg area
18.1%	22.2%	2.0%	13.1%	12.1%	17.2%	12.2%	3.0%